

**MINUTES**  
**OFF-ROAD VEHICLE TRAILS ADVISORY BOARD**  
**Holiday-Inn Lansing West**  
**7501 West Saginaw Highway**  
**Lansing, Michigan**  
**November 5, 2008**

**Chairman Ranney** called the meeting of the Off-Road Vehicle Trails Advisory Board to order at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, November 5, 2008, in Lansing, Michigan.

**Members Present:**

Dick Ranney, Chair  
Glenn Moll, Vice Chair  
Amy Spray  
Sheriff Scott Strait  
John Bernard  
Larry Harrington

**Members Absent:**

Peter Wyckoff

**Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Staff Present:**

James Radabaugh, Forest Mineral and Fire Management (FMFM), Lansing  
Steve DeBrabander, FMFM, Lansing  
Steve Kubisiak, FMFM, Lansing  
Lt. Andrew Turner, Law Enforcement Division (LED), Lansing  
Lt. Creig Grey, LED, Roscommon  
Amanda Matelski, FMFM, Cadillac  
Pete Lundberg, Park and Recreation Division, Mears

**USDA Forest Service Staff Present:**

Rose Ingram, Huron Manistee National Forest, Cadillac

**Welcome/Introductions** -- **Chairman Ranney** Introduced Amanda Matelski. Amanda is a new DNR employee working out of Cadillac in the recreation trails programs. Amanda is a graduate of Central Michigan University with a degree in environmental science and natural resources. She has worked for the DNR as a seasonal employee for 6 seasons, 4 of which were in the ORV program.

**MINUTES**

Acknowledged Minutes of the August 6, 2008 ORV Trails Advisory Board Meeting.

**Sheriff Strait made a motion, supported by Mr. Bernard, to accept the minutes of the August 6, 2008 ORV Trails Advisory Board Meeting as presented. Motion unanimously carried.**

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**Hiawatha National Forest Motorcycle Trail** – Ms. Ingram reported the Environmental Assessment (EA) and Decision Notice for a proposed 26 mile single-track motorcycle trail on the Hiawatha National Forest, located in Delta County, Michigan is complete. The appeal period will close on November 10, 2008. Construction is planned for spring 2009. Approximately \$47,000 in state ORV funds was used to pay for the EA, with additional funding provided by the Forest Service.

**Chairman Ranney** distributed a copy of the EA document to the audience and noted that a great amount of time and effort went into its preparation. **Chairman Ranney** thanked Ms. Ingram.

**Public Act 240** – Mr. Radabaugh reported Public Act 240 was passed in July that allows certain counties in northern Michigan authority to open roads to ORV use. He referenced a guidance document from Chief Boyd that was distributed to field staff. It is the DNR's desire to have designated routes between local communities and the ORV trail system to provide clarity for the recreational trail users as to where they may legally and safely ride their ORV. He noted PA 240 voided all previous local ordinances and that local DNR managers should work with the counties to re-establish pre-existing trail connectors. He noted that according to the Michigan Motorized Recreation Council some 15 counties have passed ordinances to-date and several more have final votes and/or hearings set.

**Chairman Ranney** said local elections have held up some counties and there are lots of different opinions and options under consideration.

**Sheriff Strait** reported the Sheriff's Association does not have an official position on the new law.

Because of all of the variables involved with local ordinances under the new law riders are encouraged to contact the County Clerk's Office for the most up-to-date information regarding local roads open to ORV use.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**Grant Program Transfer** – Mr. DeBrabander reported the grants administration function of the ORV trails, snowmobile trails, enforcement and education programs have been transferred from Grant Management to Forest, Mineral and Fire Management. The transfer included employee Maureen Houghton. One new account technician position will be established to fulfill payment functions. This realignment is hoped to result in administrative efficiencies.

**Trail Signs for Motorized Trails** - Mr. DeBrabander reported an internal workgroup completed preliminary recommendations to standards for motorized trail signs. He noted that currently there are two different sign sizes used in the ORV and snowmobile programs and is problematic where trails are multiple-use. It is hoped both practical and cost efficiencies may be realized. The preliminary recommendations have been shared with FMFM Management Team and Office of Litigation with support. Recommendations

will be brought forward to the ORV and Snowmobile advisory board/committee at future meeting(s).

**Motorized Trail Study** – **Mr. Kubisiak** reported Michigan State University is under contract to survey snowmobile and ORV users. It is a two year project. He reviewed study objectives. The snowmobile survey will be conducted in three waves and will begin this December. The ORV survey will begin in the spring of 2009. Dr. Nelson will be invited to the February 2009 meeting.

**ORV Trail Grants** – **Mr. Kubisiak** reported a total of 29 trail maintenance and 7 restorations grants were received requesting approximately \$2.2 million dollars. He reviewed grant appropriations, evaluation criterion, and evaluation process. He distributed a list of recommended grants for board information. Staff recommendations will be forwarded to the Resource Deputy for approval. He noted there are un-obligated balances in both the trail maintenance and restoration categories.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Education to Control ORV Damage (ECORD)** – **Mr. Glenn Moll** distributed correspondence and a poster he received from James Brettner, ECORD Project Manager. ECORD is a small volunteer group of concerned citizens committed to stopping illegal ORV damage in northern Luce County. They are working with local DNR and law enforcement agencies. They have distributed DNR ORV Handbooks, ECORD produced posters and ORV information stations at state forest campgrounds and other sites throughout the county. **Mr. Moll** said the group is not anti-ORV and should be recognized for their local education efforts.

**Chair Ranney** noted the poster is a real attention getter and requested staff to draft a resolution of support and appreciation for the next meeting.

### **Long-Range ORV Financial Planning Work Group Update** –

**Mr. DeBrabander** reported the purpose of the workgroup is to look at where we want the ORV program to be in ten years. The first meeting was held in August. It was a brain storming process to identify program need categories. Members had a homework assignment to develop vision statements that resulted in five pages of suggestions. The next meeting will be a conference call and is scheduled for November 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Law Enforcement Grants** – **Sheriff Strait** said his county did not get their ORV law enforcement grant until the third week of October, three weeks after the beginning of the fiscal year. He believes this is a problem because this is an active enforcement time and there are no assurances their expenses will be covered by a grant. He would like to have assurance that their expenses will be covered. **Mr. Radabaugh** said he will look into the process to determine if the grants can be issued earlier in the year.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

**Law Enforcement Division (LED)** – **Lt. Turner** reported changes in the ORV Safety Education Program are underway and asked for their patience during the transition. The curriculum has been transferred to the Office of Communications, Education and

Outreach. The grants function has been transferred to FMFM. LED will function as advisor and assist with program implementation. He introduced Mr. Dennis Fox, from the Office of Communications.

**Mr. Fox** provided an overview of the restructuring in the Office of Communications. Their office is responsible for ORV, snowmobile and hunter education and outreach efforts. Emphasis will be placed on recruiting new users and their office will be working with LED and the ORV community to refine the curriculum for the ORV safety education program. Many details still need to be worked out.

**Sheriff Strait** asked who is in charge of training instructors. He expressed concern that many of the people authorized to instruct are not qualified.

**Chairman Ranney** provided an overview of the former ORV safety education workgroup and noted the need to implement the certification training academy for instructors as recommended by that group. He said a lot of good work has already been accomplished by the workgroup and that the training academy idea just needs to be dusted off and have someone run with it.

**Chairman Ranney** asked Lt. Turner and Mr. Fox to provide him with a plan on how the DNR could improve the safety education program if it were to receive an additional \$100,000. He requested the plan by the end of December.

**Lt. Turner** said in his opinion, there is a need for a dedicated position whose sole function would be to train instructors and oversee the training certification program. This would require additional funding from the ORV program because state general funds have been cut. The DNR will provide Chairman Ranney with a plan.

**Lt. Turner** distributed a report for the ORV safety education program for the period 10/01/07 thru 9/30/08. Total students trained 6820. Total classes held 244. He also distributed safety education fund revenue projections.

**Forest, Mineral and Fire Management – Mr. Kubisiak** distributed an ORV license sales report for the period 10/01/07 thru 9/30/08. A total of 186,891 ORV licenses were sold resulting in \$2,997,394 in revenues. He noted according to the budget office there was a balance of approximately \$2.2 million in the ORV fund in July 2008.

**Mr. Radabaugh** reported a workgroup has been established for Drummond Island to review ORV trails, routes, and forest transportation system. He distributed a summary of the first meeting and list of workgroup members. The next meeting is scheduled for November 6, 2008.

**Parks and Recreation Division – Pete Lundborg, Silver Lake State Park** reported that he estimates use was down about 10% last season and accident rates remained the same, but not as severe. He noted weekday attendance was down, and weekend attendance was up. The park is re-evaluating the voucher system.

## **PUBLIC APPEARANCE**

**Mr. Bill Gilbert, Michigan ORV Safety Association** expressed concerns with the ORV safety education program. He believes the program has many shortcomings and lacks sufficient qualified instructors. He said he personally called two instructors listed on the DNR website and got bad information from both of them. He cited the ORV plan identified the need for improvements in the safety education program and nothing has been done. He is disappointed in the DNR and said he is outraged.

**Mr. Ernie Brooks** thanked the board for the opportunity to address them. He expressed concerns with the sheriff law enforcement grant program. He believes some counties are abusing the program by joy riding during the week when no one is on the trails. He said the fencing near the Leota Trail is still in place and in his opinion is a safety hazard. He does not support last year's camping fee increase for ORV campgrounds and believes attendance is down and it is a failed decision. He believes the ORV trails are poorly signed and maintained, the maps are poor, and he does not support the motorcycle trail Directors Order.

**Mr. Mike Olmstead, Local Coordinator, Drummond Island Jeep Jamboree** acknowledged the efforts of ECORD, planning efforts on Drummond Island, and suggested trail riders provide feedback to the DNR if they see errors in the trail maps. He thanked the DNR and the ORV board.

**Mr. Bob DeVore, President, Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association** gave the DNR and Genesee County Parks and Recreation Commission accolades for completing the first phase of the rock course at the Mounds ORV Park. He said it is a great draw for truck owners and can't wait for phase II and III to be complete.

**Mr. Pat Brower, Great Lakes Four Wheel Drive Association** thanked the board and welcomes the new personnel at the Mounds ORV Park. He said he is working with Genesee County and Pete Lundberg at Silver Lake on truck safety programs. He noted they just re-certified instructors for full-sized vehicles and would like to work with the DNR.

**Ms. Spray made a motion, supported by Sheriff Strait, to adjourn. Motion unanimously carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.

## **NEXT MEETING**

The 2009 meeting schedule is February 4, May 6, August 5, November 4 at the Lansing Holiday-Inn West, 7501 West Saginaw Highway Lansing, Michigan.

### **Public Present**

Bill Gilbert, MI ORV Safety Assoc.  
Doug Gillman, ATV Off-Road Club  
Mike Olmstead, Jeep Jamboree/GLFWDA  
Ernie Brooks  
Kevin Drnad, ATV Off-Rd Club of MI

Bob DeVore, Great Lks 4Wheel Dr. Assoc.  
Pat Brower, GLFWDA  
Paul Hittie, GLFWDA  
Bruce Soydam, ATV Off-Rd Club of MI  
Sue Thrushman, ATV Off-Rd Club of MI

John F. Lang, Tri-Co Chapter CCC  
Bruce Menning, GLFWDA

Lewis Shuler, CCC